GLOBALISATION, DEMOCRACY AND ADULT LEARNING :
the impact of neo-liberalism on the 'curriculum' of adult education in one city in New Zealand/Aotearoa

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Abstract

The field of adult learning and education has a rich and diverse history, and those of us working in the field are privileged to be able to draw on a range of traditions. This paper identifies some of these traditions, describes some features of globalisation and analyses its impact on adult learning and education. Drawing on the findings of a large-scale project which looks at programme trends and patterns in one city in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s in the light of government policies, the paper examines whether we are losing touch with some of these traditions as a consequence of increasing globalisation. In particular my concern is that democratic traditions may be lost as corporations and governments seek to reduce the scope of adult learning programmes and as those of us working in the field find ourselves driven to conform with neo-liberal policies that rest on ideologies of instrumental rationalism and abstract individualism. The paper concludes by reviewing key policy initiatives and posing questions concerning possibilities for the future.

Traditions and purposes in adult education

The field of adult learning and education has a rich and diverse history (See for example, (Dakin, 1996; Foley & Morris, 1995; Tobias, 1996) and those of us working in the field are located within diverse discourses and draw on a wide range of moral, political and intellectual traditions (Elias & Merriam, 1995; Lawson, 1982; Ruddock, 1981; Tobias, 2000; Welton, 1997). Liberal and progressive education discourses and traditions have shaped many of the dominant forms of adult education through much of this century. These traditions of adult education, at times linked closely with movements of economic, cultural, social and political reform, have sought to extend democracy and to challenge the conservative hegemony in its attempts to preserve hierarchical and elitist forms of education (Eliot, 1948) and the power structures which they sustain. In addition, these traditions have offered a challenge or critique (albeit oft-times muted and ambivalent) of neo-liberal economic doctrines, economic rationalism and other forms of technicism and managerialism (See for example (Collins, 1991)). At the same time, in keeping with their reformist tendencies, they have at times served to legitimate the elitism and individualism which are part of the various forms of imperialism and patriarchy that have characterized the growth of global capitalism over the past hundred years. In addition they have lent support to the assimilation of women and men from working class backgrounds, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples within mainstream cultural, economic and political institutions.

By way of contrast, radical adult education traditions have been located within a wide range of struggles to challenge and overthrow dominant cultural, economic and political institutions (Allman & Wallis, 1990; Freire, 1972, 1973, 1985; Horton & Freire, 1990; Johnson, 1988; Mayo, 1999; Newman, 1994; Thompson, 1980; Walker, 1990; Westwood & Thomas, 1991;

Youngman, 1986). They have been influenced by a number of radical theories including socialism and feminism, as well as by the struggles and experiences of women and men from working class backgrounds, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. Educators working within these traditions have rejected the possibility of achieving educational neutrality, and instead have sought commitment through praxis. They have attempted to remain grounded in the everyday lives of people whilst simultaneously seeking to move beyond these everyday experiences in order to identify public issues to provide a focus for political struggle.

In view of this diversity of traditions and experiences it is not surprising to note that at various times and places adult education has contributed in various ways to a number of very different social, economic, political and cultural agendas and struggles. Thus for example within democratic liberal and progressive traditions in recent centuries, adult education programmes have contributed to the following:

- the preservation and enhancement of cultural traditions;
- the promotion of critical awareness, sensitivity and appreciation of cultural, scientific, and artistic traditions, and the dissemination of information, insights and understandings of these traditions;
- the promotion and facilitation of creativity and of imaginative endeavours;
- the promotion of functional, cultural and critical literacies;
- the promotion, preservation and strengthening of traditions of democracy and active citizenship - the evidence suggests that some non-profit, voluntary organisations and groups, as well as some public tertiary education institutions, through their adult education programmes, are making a significant contribution to the preservation and strengthening of New Zealand's democratic traditions and to the promotion of active citizenship and democracy;
- the production of social capital and the promotion of civil society;
- the promotion of cultural, educational, economic and political mobilisation of marginalised, exploited or oppressed groups and communities;
- the promotion and support of community development;
- the provision of support and assistance to adults, who for whatever reasons, were 'cooled out' of formal education when they were young, to enable them to achieve their educational, cultural, occupational and social goals;
- the promotion and facilitation of lifelong learning;
- the promotion of economic development and the maintenance and upgrading of knowledge and skills required in the labour market; and
- the promotion of organisational effectiveness by providing management, employees' and workers' education, training and development programmes.

Of course, under capitalism no institution or organisation can remain free from the influences that arise out of the demands of the political economy and its contradictions; and adult education and training in so far as it takes organisational and institutional form is no exception. Thus over the past century adult education and training programmes have also contributed in various ways to the following imperatives:

- advances in the technical means of production and control necessary to the process of capitalist accumulation, and the dissemination of the technical and managerial skills and knowledge required to achieve these purposes;
- the construction and reconstruction of the social relations of capitalist production including the maintenance and preservation of the middle class as a class for example through the expansion of credentialism;
- the maintenance of the hegemonic relations necessary to the advance of capitalism in successive epochs;
- the production and reproduction of the cultural and ideological forms and traditions necessary to capitalist accumulation, including the maintenance of ideologies of individualism, economic rationalism and those associated with the alleged 'equal playing field' and 'free market' underpinning neo-liberal economic policies; and
- the legitimation of the structures and policies required for the development and advance of capitalism,

Globalisation

The concept of globalisation is a contested one. From a human welfare and human development perspective globalisation may be viewed in a positive, negative or neutral light (UNDP, 1999). Globalisation may refer to a wide range of social processes "… in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding"(Waters, 1995: 3). In this sense the term includes not only changes in the political economy but also the increasing internationalisation of the arts, culture and communication.

A different view sees globalisation as referring to economic and political processes underpinning the emergence of a new world order, within which the interests of nation-states and civil society are becoming increasingly subservient to those of transnational corporations. In this view globalisation is seen as something new - a process or phenomenon which characterises a postcolonial, post-industrial, postmodern world in which national borders cease to have the significance that they used to have (Ohmae, 1990; Reich, 1992). This view has, however, been contested by those who argue that globalisation is not a new phenomenon; that it is as old as capitalism itself; and that in many respects the political and economic features that have characterised the phenomenon called globalisation over the past twenty years are not dissimilar to those which characterised the international political economy between 1870 and 1914. It is argued that most transnational corporations still depend on the support of their host nation states, and that nation states along with both old and new social movements and Non-Governmental Organisations of civil society still have a major political role to play both on their own and in concert with other states regionally and internationally (Carnoy, Castells, Cohen, & Cardosa, 1993; Hurst & Thompson, 1996).

These arguments seem convincing and for my purpose here I will draw on this understanding of globalisation. It seems clear to me that the processes of economic globalisation are not new (Foley, 1999a). Nor are they necessarily progressive, as some would have us believe. Nor are

they politically neutral (Richardson, 1995; Upton, 1987). On the contrary, the processes of globalisation are as old as capitalism itself. They are driven by the imperatives and requirements of multinational capital, which have created a worldwide playground for the wealthy, and widened the gap between rich and poor. The historical patterns are well documented. Thus it has been reported that: 'At the start of the 19th century the ratio of real incomes per head between the world's richest and poorest countries was three to one. By 1900 it was 10 to one, and by 2000 it had risen to 60 to one' (Seabrook, 2000, Feb 17-23)! Moreover if one looks only at the past forty years the picture of rapidly increasing inequalities is even clearer. Whereas in 1960 the income of the richest 20% of the world's people was 30 times that of the poorest 20%, by 1997 this differential had grown dramatically with the incomes of the richest 20% being 74 times those of the poorest 20% (UNDP, 1999: 36). Although the past two centuries have been characterised by substantial economic growth, at least as measured by such conventional measures as GNP and GDP, this growth, which may well be unsustainable in the long-term (Mishan, 1993), has been uneven (Amin, 1977), as well as being associated with massive increases in global inequality (Maddison, 1995).

The processes of globalisation then may usefully be distinguished from those associated with the internationalisation of trade (Korsgaard, 1997). The latter implies the growth of interconnections and interdependence between local, regional and national economies. Globalisation is different. It is grounded in the growth of capitalism, and involves in particular the growth of transnational corporations as well as the growth in the capacity of deregulated financial institutions to dominate the political economies of localities, nation-states and regions. Global flows of capital sharpen international competition and undermine the possibility of nation-states carrying out economic policies based on the interests of their own peoples decided upon democratically. Increasingly, national governments are unable to control international capital, which crosses borders with great speed and imposes its own agendas on all aspects of state policy.

Principles of democracy and active citizenship, and in particular principles of participatory and industrial democracy, that have struggled to survive over the past couple of centuries have come under renewed attack in recent years. There is little that is new in this. The inherent tensions and contradictions that exist between capitalism and democracy have been evident for a very long time. Thomas Marshall (Marshall, 1950, 1977), distinguished sociologist and social democrat, is but one of a number of scholars from a range of disciplines and political perspectives who have analysed this tension. In the 1940s in the UK he argued that a permanent and irresolvable tension or contradiction existed between the demands of capitalism and the principles of citizenship. On the basis of a review of two centuries of history, he argued that, whereas on the one hand the development of capitalism rests inevitably and necessarily on the production of class inequalities and thus generates class struggles; on the other hand the principles of citizenship and democracy undermine these inequalities.

The processes of globalisation both reflect and reinforce this contradiction. By seeking to limit or restrict the capacity of localities, regions and states to exercise any significant form of self-determination, the forces of transnational capital shake the very foundations of democracy

and throw into disarray the various elements brought together fifty years ago within the welfare state compromise. To compensate for this loss of political capacity new international institutions are created in an attempt to regulate and co-ordinate economic policy eg the World Trade organisation, the IMF, the World Bank, and the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investments (MAI). However these international institutions with little if any democratic basis are highly susceptible to the requirements of multinational capital with the only significant opposition coming from NGOs and community groups organising protest action at regional and international meetings.

It may be argued that globalisation is not really global. It is at the very least an uneven process in which there is a cleavage between skyscraper economies and shantytowns. It is essentially the symbol analysts who participate directly in the global economy and the global labour market (Reich, 1992). These highly trained and privileged people seem to have more in common with one another than with their poor compatriots. Often they live and work in enclaves and have little contact with the local society in their direct environment. Their children go to private schools and private security guards see to their safety. The processes of globalisation, then, are built on ideologies of unfettered market competition, which legitimate the privatisation of public services and promote unrestricted trade. The processes of globalisation, grounded as they are in the reorganisation of capitalism in recent decades (Foley, 1999b), have given immense power to transnational corporations and lent support to neo-liberal doctrines that justify social hierarchy and inequality.

This paper, then, attempts to shed light on some of the ways in which the recent processes of globalisation and the associated reorganisation of capitalism, together with the neo-liberal political agendas (Kelsey, 1995) which have accompanied and facilitated this reorganisation, have re-shaped the agendas and purposes of adult education. In particular, through an examination of programme trends in one city in Aotearoa/New Zealand over a fifteen-year period, I hope to explore some of the ways in which democratic liberal and progressive traditions of adult education have been affected by these changes.

Methodology

This paper is part of a larger project the aim of which is to throw light on the changing face of post-compulsory education and training in Aotearoa/New Zealand over a thirteen-year period from 1983 to 1995. For this purpose a database was developed consisting of all education and training programmes offered to the people of Christchurch in every alternate year from 1983 to 1995. Thus our data cover the following seven years: 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993 and 1995.

The information for the database was obtained from three main sources. In the first place, a systematic search was undertaken of each page of every issue of 'The (Christchurch) Press'; the only morning daily newspapers serving Christchurch, over a 15-week period during January/February, May/June, and August/September in each of the years covered by the research. The aim of the search was to identify every educational programme or activity

advertised or referred to in the news, feature, or advertisement columns. The weeks covered by this search were chosen after a preliminary search had shown that the bulk of programmes offered each year were advertised during these dates. They included the periods before the start of each term as well as the dates of publication of the education or continuing education supplements published by 'The Press'.

In addition to this, the newspaper search was extended to cover the remaining months of each year with the more limited but nevertheless considerable object of identifying all programmes and activities which sought to respond to or promote or discuss or protest against any public policy or issue. This also involved a systematic search of every page of every issue of 'The (Christchurch) Press'. The decision to extend the coverage in this way was made once it had been determined that although the vast majority of programmes were identified in the 15 week period each year, notices and reports on public policy programmes were inevitably scattered throughout the year.

The second source of data was the Canterbury Public Library. Since the early 1980s this library has maintained a Directory of Continuing Education (DICE) which provides the public with a source of information on programmes offered in all parts of the city. A wide range of educational institutions, voluntary organisations and community groups are invited to send information about their programmes to the library. These include the University of Canterbury, Christchurch Polytechnic, all the schools in the city which offer programmes, the WEA, community centres, recreation centres and sports stadiums, the Family Planning Association, Marriage Guidance Council, Parents' Centre, and many other specialised agencies and centres providing programmes for the public.

The third source of data was the agencies and organisations themselves. Firstly, we have obtained complete sets of brochures and prospectuses from as many organisations and groups as possible for the period 1983 to 1995. Secondly, we have consulted organisational files and records to check on our data and to obtain further information on enrolments and programme cancellations to add to the database. Thirdly, selected agency heads, programme planners and key organisational members have been interviewed to obtain additional information and to find out what they identify as the factors affecting changes in their programmes.

Finally, in addition to building up the above-mentioned database, we are engaged in an ongoing study of policy changes at the national level. This involves consulting a wide range of official and unofficial documents and reports and newspaper clippings, as well as conducting interviews with policy-makers and drawing on secondary source material.

Each programme identified through the search described above was allocated its own record in a FileMaker Pro computer file. This file was then linked with another one in which the name of every organisation identified in the search, together with a designated abbreviation, was entered. Each programme was then coded on the basis of some twenty categories using a separate field for each category.

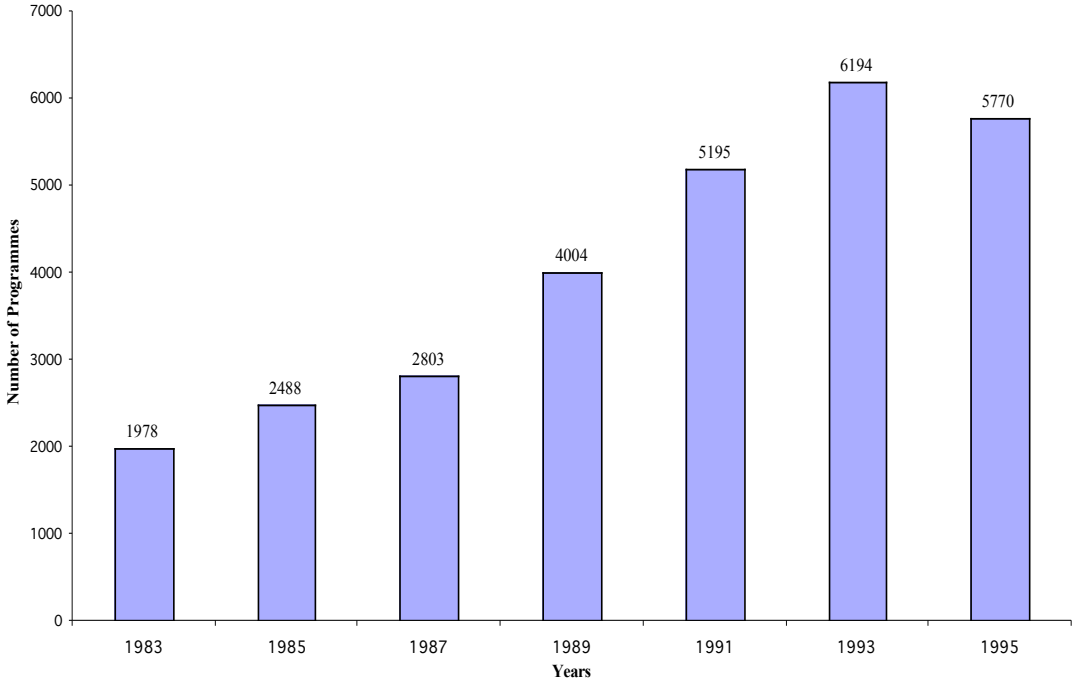
Despite the extensive nature of the search undertaken in order to build up our data-base and the breadth of scope of the definition of adult education for active citizenship used in this paper, a number of important limitations remain. These include the fact that we have relied largely on printed sources and have included only those adult education programmes that focus explicitly and deliberately on public issues in the ways set out above. Programmes that are less explicit have not been included.

Changes in the 'curriculum' of adult education, 1983-95

Figure 1 documents the overall number of education and training programmes for adults offered in Christchurch every second year over the period from 1983 to 1995. Despite the slight fall-off in 1995, the overall growth is substantial, with almost three times as many programmes being offered in 1995 than in 1983.

Figure 1

Number of educational programmes for adults organised every second year in Christchurch 1983-1995



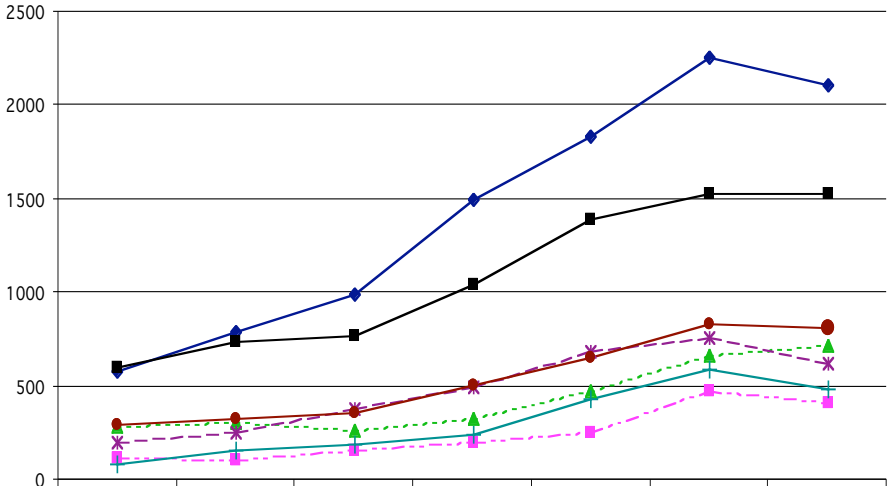
This growth is remarkable and the data could be used to paint a glowing picture of the growth in learning opportunities and the shift to a learning society. A more critical view however would suggest that more needs to be known about the phenomenon before we begin to draw conclusions. And this is especially important when it is recognised, as pointed out above, that this growth took place at the very time that neo-liberal policies were being implemented first by the Labour government and then by National, and when there was a growing gap between rich and poor both globally and locally. How then do we explain the phenomenon? What was the nature of the growth? Is there evidence that the provision of adult education was becoming increasingly dominated by economic rationalism or the new vocationalism (See for example (Cohen, 1984). Which kinds of programmes have grown? And which have fallen away? Has there been a growth or falling away in job-related programmes? Or in general education

programmes or adult basic education programmes? Or in personal development or family-oriented or recreational programmes? Or in programmes intended to promote active citizenship? Has there been a shift in the balance of these programme areas within the overall 'curriculum' of adult education? Or has there been a growth or falling away in the contribution of programmes from the public or private sector or from the voluntary organisations of civil society? And how can we explain the changes?

Let us look first at the overall changes that have taken place in the various programme areas over the years. Figure 2 summarises trends in the provision of all kinds of programmes over the period from 1983-1995.

Figure 2

Trends in the organisation of educational programmes in various programme areas, 1983-1995



	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995
Job-related programmes	576	790	991	1501	1836	2258	2105
Adult basic education	112	109	161	205	255	472	407
General education	280	306	263	325	475	661	715
Hobbies & recreations	598	735	767	1048	1391	1525	1534
Personal development	204	258	381	491	688	756	620
Civic & political	291	322	354	502	657	835	811
Other incl home & family	88	162	194	247	435	595	481

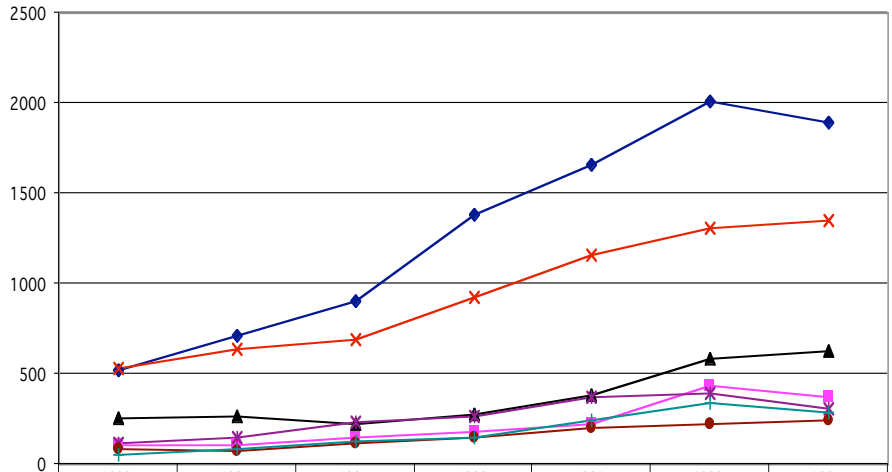
The first and perhaps most striking feature of this graph is the similarity of the patterns of change across all fields of adult education. In each of the fields there is an overall pattern of growth. However the rate of growth varied somewhat between each of the programme areas. Programmes focusing on finance and investment grew fastest with an average rate of growth of 52% per annum over the entire period. However the number of these programmes remained relatively small, reaching a peak of 81 programmes in 1993 before falling back to 65 in 1993. The next largest increase was in the number of home and family life programmes, which grew from 62 in 1983 to 352 in 1995 at an average annual rate of 39% per annum. Programmes addressing religious and spiritual topics grew from 17 to 64 at an average growth rate of 23% per annum, and these were followed by job-related and adult basic education programmes, each with an average annual growth rate of 22%. Programmes addressing personal development topics grew by 17% per annum, and programmes addressing civic, political and

community topics grew by 15%. Finally general education programmes and hobby and recreational programmes each grew at the rate of 13% per annum.

The data presented in Figures 1 & 2 are comprehensive. They cover all kinds of programmes organised in Christchurch in every field of activity in the relevant years. Thus, in addition to courses and classes, they include workshops, seminars, conferences, talks, lectures, symposia, public meetings, demonstrations, etc.

Figure 3

Trends in the provision of classes & courses in various fields, 1983-1995



	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995
Job-related programmes	517	717	900	1379	1658	2015	1893
Adult basic education	105	108	146	183	223	432	371
General education	253	269	226	272	383	585	626
Hobbies & recreations	535	643	692	929	1158	1309	1356
Personal development	122	150	236	265	377	392	304
Civic & political	80	78	112	148	202	220	240
Other, including home & family	51	85	129	147	240	339	285

In order to investigate whether the patterns of change would be similar if a more limited and traditional definition of education were to be used, we undertook a further analysis of a section of the data. Figure 3 summarises the findings of this further analysis. It presents data on the patterns of change in the provision of courses and classes only. Excluded are all the other shorter programmes as well as study and support groups. Clearly the pattern of change in the number of courses and classes offered each year (as shown in Figure 3) is very similar to that for all programmes (as shown in Figure 2).

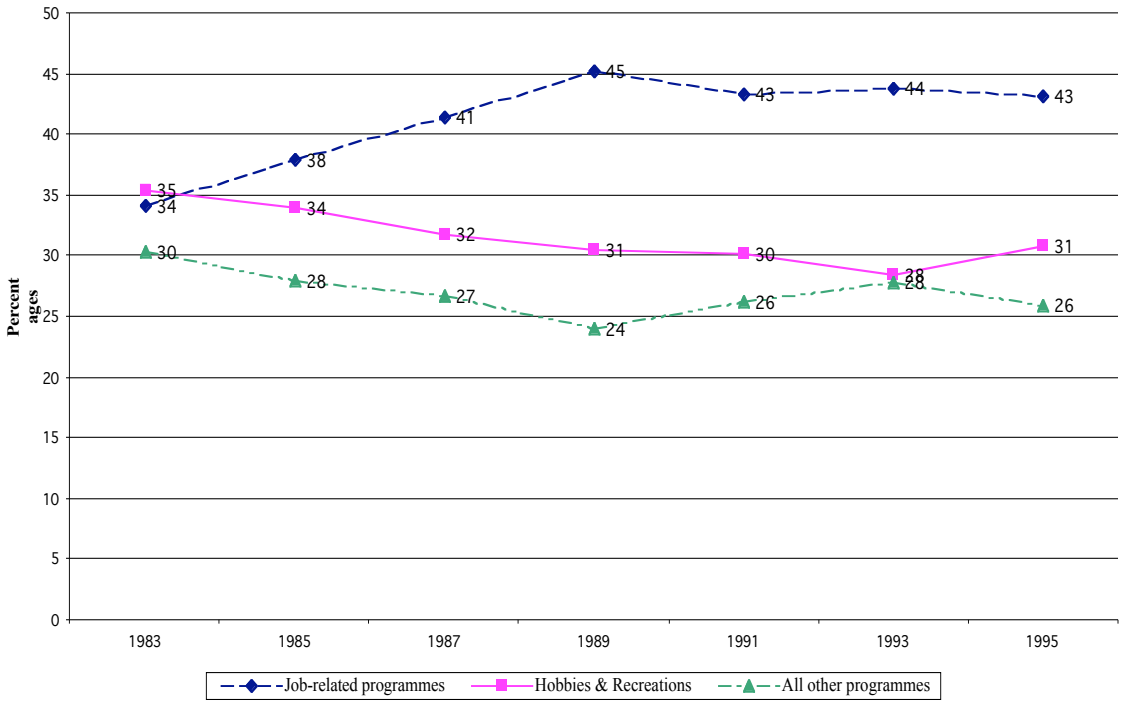
Once again some variation between programme areas is apparent. Courses and classes on home and family life topics grew fastest from 39 in 1983 to 240 in 1995 at an average annual growth rate of 43%, and those on finance and investment topics grew the least at an annual rate of 8%. Courses on religious and spiritual topics grew from 6 to 33 at an average growth rate of 38% per annum, and these were followed by job-related courses which grew at an average annual rate of 22% and adult basic education courses which grew at an average rate of 21% per annum. Courses addressing civic, political and community topics grew by 17% per

annum and those on hobby and recreational topics by 13%. Finally general education courses and personal development courses each grew at the rate of 12% per annum.

We have now looked in some detail at the patterns of growth both in the number of all kinds of programmes and in the provision of courses and classes over the period from 1983 to 1995. In order to present a fuller picture of overall trends, however, it will also be useful to examine the relative contributions of different programme areas to the pattern of provision. In addition we will analyse the contributions of various kinds of organisations to the field, before turning finally to present a picture of trends in the provision of active citizenship classes and courses (Tobias, 1997).

Figure 4

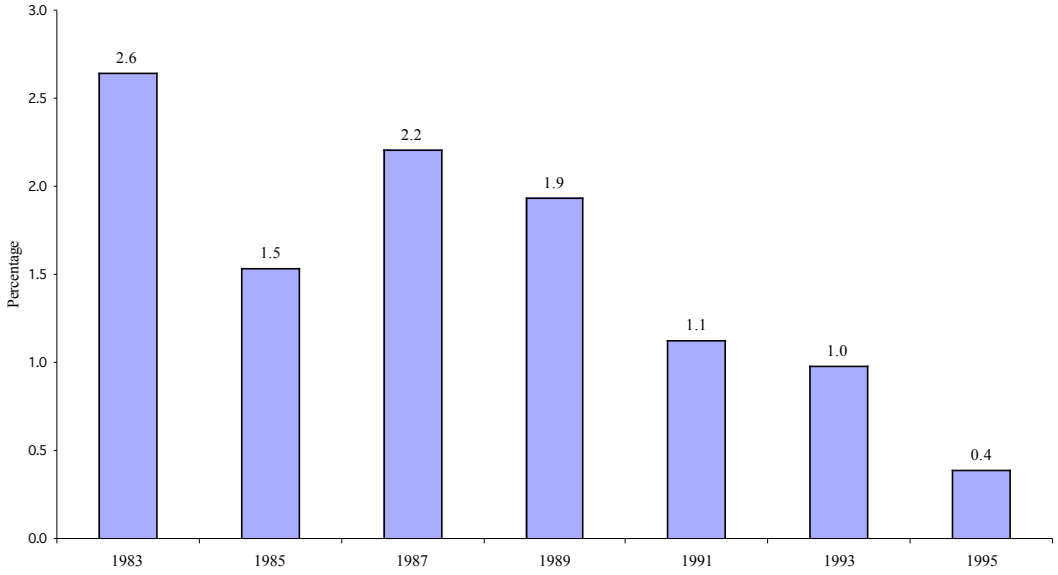
Proportions of job-related and hobby-related and other classes and courses, 1983-1995



Firstly, then, to examine the contributions of different programme areas to the overall picture, Figure 4 enables us to compare the proportion of job-related, hobby-related and other types of courses over the period. The data presented point to the following. The proportion of job-related courses rose from 34% of all courses in 1983 to 45% in 1989 and then leveled off at 43% in 1991 and 1995. At the same time the proportion of hobby-related courses fell steadily from 35% of all courses in 1983 to 31% in 1989 to 28% in 1993 before rising again to 31% in 1995. As far as all other courses and classes are concerned they comprised 30% of the total in 1983 and fell away to 24% in 1989 before leveling off at 26% in 1991 and 1995. In spite of the overall increases in number of courses in most programme areas it is clear that the proportion of job-related courses grew at a significantly higher rate than in any other programme area. On the other hand hobby and recreational courses remained a significant component of the entire curriculum.

Figure 5

Classes & courses focused on active citizenship as a percentage of all classes & courses, 1983-1995

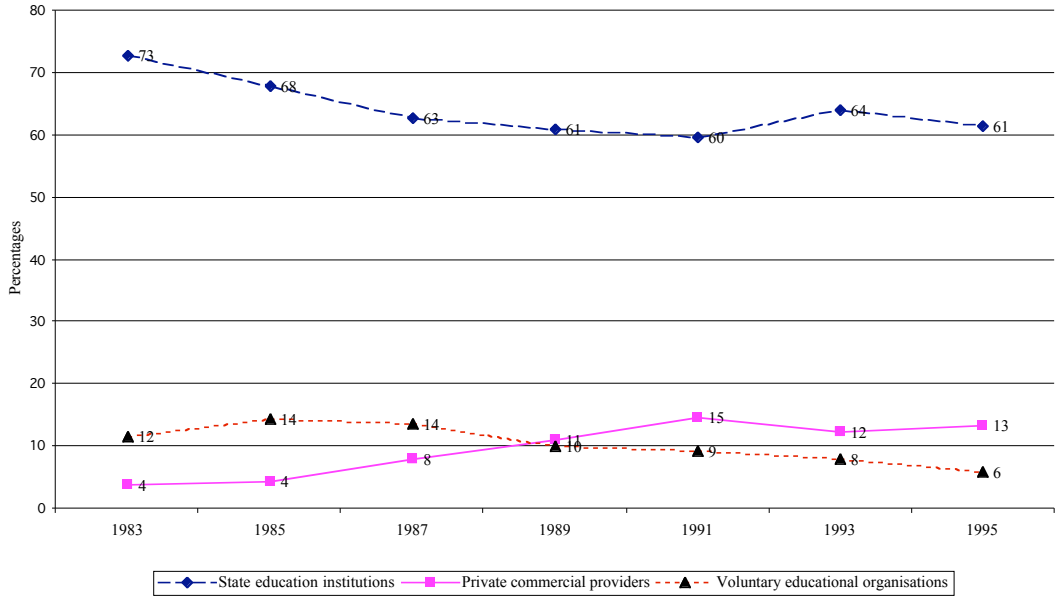


Secondly, as we move to Figure 5, it should be noted that the overall number of active citizenship classes and courses (i.e. those designed explicitly to analyse, critique or challenge public policies or issues) fell away significantly over the period from 40 in 1983 to 17 in 1995. Figure 5 presents a picture of the falling off in these classes and courses as a percentage of all classes.

Finally, Figure 6 enables us to examine the relative contributions of state education institutions (the universities, the polytechnic, the college of education and the secondary schools), private commercial education establishments, and voluntary education organisations (primarily the WEA). The data demonstrate that most courses and classes offered throughout the period were provided by state education institutions. However their share of the total provision fell from 73% in 1983 to 60% in 1991 before rising somewhat to a share of 61% of total provision in 1995. There was also a significant falling away in the proportion of courses offered by voluntary organisations. In 1983 12%

Figure 6

Percentage of courses offered by various kinds of organisations, 1983-1995



of the total class provision was contributed by voluntary organisations. This contribution rose to 14% in 1985. From that year however it fell steadily to 6% of total provision in 1995 By way of contrast, in 1983 the proportion of all courses and classes offered by private commercial providers was very small. It stood at 4% of total provision. From 1985 the proportion of these classes grew rapidly to reach 15% in 1991. Thereafter it fell somewhat until in 1995 private commercial providers contributed 13% of the total provision of classes and courses.

Policy changes

On the basis of the data presented above the following general observations may be made. The period from 1983 to 1995 was characterised by considerable overall growth in adult education provision in Christchurch, with about a three-fold increase in the number of programmes. The most significant increases took place in job-related programmes, with nearly four times more programmes in 1995 than in 1983. In addition, job-related programmes came to occupy an increasingly dominant position in the curriculum of adult education, with 43% of total course provision in 1995 as compared with 34% in 1983. In spite of this, courses in other areas also saw substantial increases. Thus for example about two and a half times more hobby-related classes were offered in 1995 than in 1983. Nevertheless, even with these increases, hobby-related classes as well as other classes came to occupy a somewhat less prominent position than vocational classes within the total adult education curriculum. Moreover, the number and proportion of adult education classes for active citizenship fell away significantly over the period. Finally, although state education institutions taken together continued to provide the largest share of classes and courses throughout the period, their share of the total course provision fell from 73% in 1983 to 61% in 1995. The proportion of their contribution as well as that of voluntary educational organisations, which fell from 12% to 6% of the total

curriculum, was affected by the steady increase in the proportion of courses offered by the emergent private commercial providers.

These changes can be attributed to a number of policy developments in the late-1980s and early-1990s. In 1986 the labour government adopted two initiatives. Firstly, in June the government launched Access, a major new employment-related education and training programme. This constituted a key response to high unemployment. It involved a significant shift of resources from job-creation to training, a decision to 'target' state funds to provide education and training assistance to unemployed people, and particularly to unemployed people drawn from 'disadvantaged' groups, equal recognition of private and state training providers in the competition for state funding, and a decentralisation of decision-making to newly established Regional Employment and Access Councils. The establishment of Access led to a growth of job-related courses and, to a somewhat lesser extent, to adult basic education courses for unemployed people; it also provided the foundation for the process of increasing privatisation of many of these courses.

Secondly in December 1986 the department of education announced the amendment of regulations governing schools-based community education to allow for the devolution to schools of decision-making on schools-based community education programmes, subject only to guidelines provided by the department requiring schools to consult with local communities and to allocate some resources to ‘disadvantaged groups’. This important step, which received very little attention from the media and from educationalists in general, has had a very significant effect on the field of adult education. Not the least important of these effects was the doubling of hobby-related classes between 1987 and 1993 as well as increases in classes in other areas. As a consequence of the 1986 amendment, for the very first time in their history schools in general were largely free to make their own decisions on which programmes should receive priority as well as on questions of format and length of programmes. This process was taken even further through the Education Act of 1989, which provided for major changes in the administration of schools, with each school being chartered to the newly created Ministry of Education. The benefits of greater school autonomy which may give rise to new programme possibilities need to be set in the context of the wider financial pressures on schools and the consequent increasing pressures on community education coordinators to generate new revenues for the school.

The Education Act of 1989, which focused on the school sector, was followed in 1990 by an Education Amendment Act, which brought about a major re-structuring of post-compulsory education and in particular tertiary education. This Act provided inter alia for: the establishment of a common system of management and administration of all tertiary institutions on the basis of charters; the use of a common Equivalent Full Time Student (EFTS)-based formula for the allocation of state funding; institutions to seek actively for alternative sources of funds to supplement their state subsidies; the establishment of the Education & Training Support Agency (ETSA) to administer Access and industry-related programmes; and the establishment of the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA) with wide powers to develop a new qualifications framework. The Act thus provided for a very much

greater degree of autonomy from state control for polytechnics and colleges of education while also signaling a possible increase in state control of universities. The Act also provided for tertiary institutions to engage in new forms of entrepreneurialism. This Act was passed by the Labour Government in June 1990.

In November of that same year a National Government was elected to office on the promise of a 'decent society', and on a tide of voter disenchantment with a Labour Government which had all but destroyed the welfare state compromise. In December 1990, however, one of the first initiatives of the new government was to produce an 'Economic and Social Statement' which announced massive cuts in welfare benefits and housing assistance. This was followed in 1991 with a whole series of measures designed to cut back radically on the provisions of the welfare state.

In July 1991 the National government announced its new education policies as part of its first budget and within the context of a very strong commitment by government to neo-liberal ideology along with a view which suggested that New Zealand's economic ills derived from past protectionist policies and limitations and skill deficits in the labour market. Policies thus included a wide range of measures. The standard tuition fee for tertiary studies was to be abolished and instead individual tertiary institutions were to be required to set their own fees. 'Study Right', a mechanism which enabled the state to fund different categories of tertiary students at different rates and progressively to reduce the level of funding of older students, was to be established. Cuts were announced in student allowances to bring them into line with the unemployment benefit, and the iniquitous student loan scheme was introduced. A capital charge on the assets of tertiary institutions was proposed, and cuts were announced in the funding of NZQA, the Career Development and Transition Education Service. ETSA and a wide range of community groups. It was announced that all state funding of the WEA would be withdrawn.

The introduction of a new 'Industry Skills Training Strategy' was announced in 1991 and the new measures were set in place in June 1992 in terms of the Industry Training Act. This included the progressive replacement of Access by TOP – a more highly targeted and restricted Training Opportunity Programme. It also included the establishment of a Youth Traineeship Scheme, and the consolidation of other funds for training, apprenticeships, etc. to be available on a contestable basis to new Industry Training Organisations (ITO's). These ITOs, funded partly by government and partly by industry, were recognised by ETSA and replaced the previous tripartite Industry Training Boards. The ITOs were to operate their own training programmes leading to competency-based qualifications approved by NZQA.

In 1991 the NZQA adopted its new qualifications framework. This was designed to provide for the development of a flexible, modularized competency-based system education and training, in which it would be possible for individuals' previously attained competencies to be recognised and in which all education and training would lead to nationally recognised qualifications. In February 1993 the first units of the new qualifications framework were launched. In the meantime in 1992 in conformity with neoliberal orthodoxy and in spite of

evidence to indicate considerable success on the part of the Trade Union Education Authority (TUEA) in providing useful education and training for people many of whom had had little if any positive prior experience of education, the government passed the Union Representatives Education Leave Act Repeal Act. This Act provided for the withdrawal of the right of union representatives to paid educational leave as well as for the disestablishment of TUEA.

In addition in October 1992 the government announced new School Community Education Instructions. Although these did not result in any new state funds going into schools-based community education, they did provide for more equitable geographical distribution of existing funds for this purpose across the country. As a consequence some schools lost access to state resources while others benefited, and overall it seems that Christchurch schools may well have lost some funding. In addition to this these Instructions also provided some further guidelines for schools and more effective accountability through advisory groups in the use of these funds, as well as requiring that at least 15% of the funds be made available to community groups. Measures such as these had been called for a number of years. However the positive effect of the requirement that schools provide some support for community groups were somewhat limited by the fact that many community groups and voluntary organisations were facing severe cuts in state funding from other sources at the same time.

Conclusion – the triumph of the neo-liberal agenda?

The above summary of policy developments has thrown some light on key factors influencing the changes in the 'curriculum' of adult education over the period which we identified and described in a previous section of this paper. Our findings highlight some of the ways in which neo-liberalism and the policies to which it has given birth have influenced these changes. The picture presented suggests that some narrowing of the curriculum was taking place over the period, with the proportion of job-related courses rising from 34% in 1983 to 43% in 1995. The findings lend support to the view that economic rationalism and the new vocationalism were gaining strength. Moreover, as we have seen, there was an apparent fall-off in the number and proportion of education programmes for active citizenship, and this may signal a loosening of the links between adult education and a range of democratic imperatives. And the increasing privatisation, competition, fragmentation, commercialization, commodification, entrepreneurialism and credentialism all signal a shift in the focus of adult education. Increasingly it would appear that adult education has come to be viewed not as a process to be valued in itself or for its part in promoting and supporting democratic traditions or even for its part in developing individual skills and knowledge or in promoting greater equality of educational access. Rather, it would appear that it has come to be viewed increasingly on the one hand as a consumer commodity to be bought and sold in the market place in much the same way as any other commodity within a capitalist economy and on the other hand in the light of human capital theory as a form of investment which may be justified only to the extent that it provides human labour power with the skills and expertise required to generate surpluses.

It would appear that at least part of the growth of job-related and other courses between 1987 and 1995 took the form of employment-related courses for the increasing number of unemployed. There is little evidence to suggest that the establishment of Access and Tops has contributed much to the solution of problems of unemployment. Despite the rhetoric there is little evidence to support the argument that increased levels of unemployment and underemployment over the past 15 years have arisen because of a lack of skills in the labour market. On the contrary there is ample evidence to suggest that it was the neoliberal economic and monetary policies of successive governments that gave rise to high levels of unemployment and that unemployment rates are at best only closely linked with levels of formal education or credentials. This is not of course to suggest that adult education and training programmes should not be made readily available to those people and citizens who have been marginalised or exploited by the political economy of advanced capitalism or who for one reason or another have been 'cooled out' of formal schooling (Clark, 1960).

At the same time as there seems to have been an increasing vocationalism of the curriculum, the period also witnessed a continuing expansion of recreational and hobby-related classes and courses, areas of traditional strength in the New Zealand system. The growth in these and other courses did not match that in the vocational area. Nevertheless it was significant and does require explanation. This explanation may be found partly in the changes to the regulations governing school-based community education, the reforms of educational institutions and in particular the freeing up of polytechnics. These may be interpreted as manifestations of the progressive forces that remained albeit on the back foot within the labour government of the 1980s. They may also be seen to reflect in some measure the inertia within the schools-based system of community education that had been noted as far back as the 1970s. Thirdly it may be interpreted as arising out of the increasing pressures on institutions to generate increasing proportions of their budgets from entrepreneurial course developments. Certainly over the period there was a significant increase both in public institutions and in the private sector in the number of courses designed to generate surpluses.

Does all this imply the inevitable triumph of the forces of globalisation and of the neo-liberal policies they promote? The evidence does not support this conclusion. On the contrary it seems to me that counter-hegemonic forces of resistance have re-emerged to oppose the neo-liberal forces of globalisation. Elsewhere (Tobias, 1997) I have examined some of the evidence of the part played by educators and in particular by those working within a social movement context to maintain and strengthen democratic forms of adult education. This task requires both educational and political action, and events since the election of the Labour-led government in December 1999 suggest that at least some new frameworks and arenas (Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, 2000) have been established within which it is at least possible to engage in the process of struggle and resistance to the encroachments of corporate globalisation and to re-embark on the long haul to democracy.

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